Few Lincoln alumni can claim to be still writing and publishing books in their nineties, as 1940 B Ag Science graduate Ralph Ballinger can. Ballinger has a long personal and professional association with the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, serving for many years on the executive then as Chairman and President. Among other awards, he received an OBE in 1978 for his services to horticulture and was made an Associate of Honour of the RNZIH in 1987. However, it is not just the inspirational feat of publishing his memoirs at aged 91 that makes Ballinger’s book such an interesting read. In this autobiographical journey the author also parallels New Zealand’s horticultural development in the second half of the 20th century. After graduating from Lincoln, he served in World War 2 and was seconded to participate in seed production research in England. This pivotal move was the instigation for his subsequent work when he returned to New Zealand after the war and pioneered several horticultural industries including asparagus production and even New Zealand’s only ever commercial poppy (and opium) production. While a noted figure in horticultural circles throughout New Zealand, Ballinger’s biggest presence has been in Marlborough where his contribution to horticulture and life-story unfolds as a not-so-typical but quintessential New Zealand, story. It is a story of family fun, holidays in the Marlborough Sounds and the challenges of horticultural endeavours. The title of the book, *The Sea and The Soil*, is inspired by Ballinger’s poignant belief, after a lifetime associated with both, that we must nurture and conserve them, or not, at our peril.


**Garden Techniques**
Matthew Wilson

*Garden Techniques* is a sound introduction to the basics, with information on soil preparation, plant types and growth through to tools, propagation, pruning and pests. It is written with today’s gardener in mind, one who is less inclined to use chemicals and more likely to want to encourage wildlife into the garden. As with the other manuals in this series, it is clearly illustrated and laid out with lots of handy tips in boxes. Towards the back of the book there’s an easy-to-follow troubleshooting chart. Here, it categorises plant pest and disease symptoms – a valuable aid to the novice and experienced gardener alike.

**Plants for Shade**
Philip Clayton

Many gardeners view shade as a liability rather than an asset. Furthermore, some of us with shady gardens try to ignore the fact, blithely putting in plants that relish sun and then wondering why they turn into stragglers and strugglers. These gardeners will find *Plants for Shade* a great help in helping to turn shady spots into flourishing features. It tackles such questions